MHFNO: 98-0480597 SECRET
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STAFF

ACTION: IMS/ESG (021) INFO: CIC/CEG, CIC/CEGEUR, CIC/LA, CIC/OG, CIC/PRC, DC/EUR, DO/IRO, EUR/DCCI, EUR/SG, EUR/SGF, IMDORECORD, LA/FIG, LA/FIGSC, LA/LGL, LIMITED, MDSX, ODPD, ORMS/EUR, FILE, C/EUR, C/LA, CE/R, CE/R/XO, CIC/EUR (7/W)

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TOR: 091712Z FEB 98 PARI 17502

S E C R E T 091717Z FEB 98 STAFF

CITE PARIS 17502

TO: IMMEDIATE DIRECTOR.

FOR: LIMITED DISSEM IMS/ESG INFO DO/IRO, CHIEF/EUR, DC/EUR, CHIEF/LA, LA/FIG, LA/FIGSC, CIC/LA, EUR/SG, CIC/EUR, EUR/SGF, C/CE/R/XO

SLUGS: WNINTEL

*SUBJECT: <JFK ASSASSINATION>RECORDS REVIEW BOARD (ARRB): CONTINUED PROTECTION OF COVER

REF: DIRECTOR 674771 98 0430861

TEXT:

COMBINE: COMPLETE

1. ACTION REQUIRED: PLEASE ADVISE IF WE CAN BE OF FURTHER ASSISTANCE.

2. THE FOLLOWING ARE STATION RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS POSED REF:

A. IF THE STATION IS UNDECLARED, WOULD THIS DISCLOSURE LEAD TO CLOSER EMBASSY SCRUTINY OF OTHERWISE INTERFERE WITH OPERATIONS?

WERE THE ARRB RELEASES TO PROVIDE SPECIFIC AND CONCRETE USE BY PARIS STATION OF STATE COVER, THIS MIGHT CALL FOR FURTHER RESTRICTIONS ON OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES BY OUR UNILATERAL, UNDECLARED OFFICERS UNDER STATE COVER BECAUSE OF THE FOLLOWING FACTORS:

-- FRENCH INTELLIGENCE SERVICES ARE AWARE OF THE FACT THAT WE HAVE USED OFFICIAL COVER HERE AND WILL ACT WHENEVER THEY BELIEVE THAT WE ARE USING OFFICERS UNDER THAT COVER IN A MANNER HARMFUL TO FRENCH INTERESTS. WE TAKE PAINS TO ENSURE THAT THE FRENCH DO NOT SEE US AS A THREAT TO THEM LOCALLY. HOWEVER, OFFICIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THIS COVER COULD WELL PROVIDE TO POLITICIANS OR JOURNALISTS THE AMMUNITION WITH WHICH TO COMPELL AN INVESTIGATION OF OUR ACTIVITIES HERE. ADDEES WILL RECALL THAT THE 1995 PARIS 'FLAP',

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IN WHICH SIX STATION OFFICERS WERE REMOVED FROM PARIS, WAS DRIVEN IN LARGE MEASURE BY AN UNSCRUPULOUS POLITICIAN LOOKING FOR HEADLINES.

INTEGRATED STATE COVER OF OUR SMALL GROUP OF UNILATERAL OFFICERS IS AMONG THE STATION'S MOST EFFECTIVE MEANS OF ACCESS TO NON-FRENCH TARGETS. OFFICIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF OUR USE OF OFFICIAL COVER IN PARIS COULD PROMPT THEM, OR THEIR RESPECTIVE SECURITY OFFICERS, TO REVIEW THEIR AMERICAN TARGETS.

B. OTHERWISE IS THE CIA UNDER PRESSURE FROM THE HOST GOVERNMENT TO REDUCE PRESENCE, OR MORE FULLY DECLARE PRESENCE, OR UNDERTAKE NO UNDECLARED ACTIVITIES? DESCRIBE PRESENCE. DESCRIBE THOSE ACTIVITIES TO RESTRICT THE CIA (E.G. SERVICE TO SERVICE, LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES, OPPOSITION POLITICAL INITIATIVES, AND MEDIA ACTIVITIES.)

TO DATE, THE FRENCH HAVE NOT DEMANDED THE IDENTITIES OF ALL STATION PERSONNEL; HOWEVER, WE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THIS POSSIBILITY DUE TO OUR EXPECTATION THAT THE FRENCH MAY DECIDE TO MIRROR ACTIONS OF OTHER EUROPEAN SERVICES WISHING TO RESTRICT CIA PRESENCE IN THEIR RESPECTIVE COUNTRIES. ARRB DISCLOSURES WOULD SERVE AS A POSSIBLE CATALYST FOR FORCING THIS ISSUE BETWEEN US AND THE FRENCH.

C. DESCRIBE SOME PARTICULAR ACTIVITIES WHICH COULD BE IMPERILED?

UNILATERAL ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT BY THE STATION'S UNDECLARED OFFICERS, OUT-OF-COUNTRY CASE OFFICERS AND NOC'S ARE COMPARTMENTED AND CANNOT BE DISCUSSED IN THIS CHANNEL. WE DEFER TO EUR/SG RE PROVISION OF SPECIFIC OPERATIONAL DETAILS.

D. ARE THERE NEW INITIATIVES WITH THE HOST GOVERNMENT AND SERVICE WHICH COULD BE IMPERILED? DESCRIBE.

FORWARD MOVEMENT ON OUR JOINT WORK WITH THE FRENCH SERVICES, MOST IMPORTANTLY IN COUNTERTERRORISM, WAS SLOWED IN THE YEAR FOLLOWING THE 1995 DEMARCHE. OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS, WE HAVE SEEN SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS IN THE WILLINGNESS OF THE FRENCH SERVICES TO RESUME ACTIVE AND PRODUCTIVE LIAISON. OF PARTICULAR NOTE ARE OUR CURRENT JOINT COUNTERTERRORISM INITIATIVES, (E.G., SUPPORT FROM THE FRENCH INTERNAL POLICE/INTELLIGENCE SERVICES, THE DST AND RG, OF CTC'S 17 NOVEMBER TASK FORCE THROUGH TECHNICAL AND PHYSICAL SURVEILLANCE OF 17N TARGETS LOCATED IN PARIS), AND AN IMPORTANT NEW INITIATIVE WITH THE FRENCH EXTERNAL SERVICE, THE DGSE, TO WORK JOINTLY AGAINST RUSSIAN SVR INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS IN LOCATIONS WHERE OUR COMBINED RESOURCES WOULD BE MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL. QUESTIONS RAISED IN THE PRESS OR WITHIN THESE SERVICES REGARDING THE POSSIBILITY OF UNDECLARED UNILATERAL ACTIVITIES IN FRANCE WOULD PLACE AT RISK THE CURRENT MOMENTUM WE HAVE WITH THE FRENCH SERVICES IN THESE AREAS.

E. IS CIA PRESENCE INHERENTLY SENSITIVE BECAUSE OF HOSTILE POPULATION ELEMENTS OR POLITICAL ACTIVITIES?

THE FRENCH PRESS IS GENERALLY NEGATIVE REGARDING ANY ASPECT OF CIA PRESENCE IN FRANCE. FOR THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT AND SERVICES, THE DISTINCTION THEY HAVE DRAWN IS BETWEEN UNILATERAL OPERATIONS THAT TOUCH ON FRENCH AREAS OF INTEREST AND SOVEREIGNTY, IN OTHER WORDS, THE ACTIVITIES OF OFFICERS UNDER STATE COVER AND/OR NOC'S, AND THOSE JOINT AREAS OF OPERATIONAL ENGAGEMENT WHICH THE FRENCH BELIEVE SERVE MUTUAL INTERESTS. AS WE HAVE SEEN HISTORICALLY, WHEN THE FRENCH DISCOVER THE FORMER, THEY TAKE QUICK INVESTIGATIVE AND DIPLOMATIC ACTION TO CLOSE THESE OPERATIONS DOWN.

F. IS THERE POSSIBILITY OF HOSTILE USE (E.G. RUSSIAN OR CUBAN) TO DISCREDIT US EMBASSY AS A "NEST OF SPIES" OR SIMILAR?

THIS IS A POSSIBILITY, BUT WE WOULD EXPECT THAT ANY HOSTILE EXPLOITATION WOULD BE SEEN IN PRESS PLACEMENT/PROPAGANDA RE A "NEST OF SPIES" VICE A DIPLOMATIC PROTEST. WE WOULD NOT EXPECT THAT SUCH PRESS COVERAGE, IF UNSUBSTANTIATED, WOULD HAVE A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON OUR SERVICE-TO-SERVICE OR GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT RELATIONS. IF SUCH PRESS EXPLOITATION BY HOSTILE SERVICES DREW ON SPECIFIC AND CONCRETE EXAMPLES OF PARIS STATION'S USE OF STATE COVER, IT COULD NEGATIVELY IMPACT OUR ABILITY TO SUSTAIN SOME UNILATERAL ACTIVITY DUE TO A POSSIBLE INCREASE OF FRENCH SCRUTINY OF OUR OFFICERS (SEE BELOW).

G. HAVE THERE BEEN PAST IMBROGLIOS OVER CIA PRESENCE OR ACTIVITIES THAT THIS RELEASE COULD RESURRECT?

AS NOTED ABOVE, IN EARLY 1995 THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT DEMARCHED THE U.S. AMBASSADOR TO FRANCE OVER INCOMPATIBLE ACTIVITIES OF A STATION NOC AND SEVERAL UNDECLARED OFFICERS. THE FRENCH REVEALED INVESTIGATIVE MATERIAL (INCLUDING THE RESULTS OF PHYSICAL AND TECHNICAL SURVEILLANCE AND PHOTOGRAPHY OF OUR OFFICERS) THAT BULWARKED THEIR CONTENTION THAT PARIS STATION WAS RUNNING UNILATERAL OPERATIONS TARGETING FRENCH POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC INTERESTS BY OFFICERS UNDER EMBASSY COVER AND NOC'S. THE FRENCH PRESS COVERAGE WAS EXTENSIVE AND HOSTILE. BY THE TIME THE FRENCH CONCLUDED THEIR SERIES OF DEMARCHES, THEY HAD INDICATED THEIR DESIRE FOR THE RECALL OF SIX STATION OFFICERS.

WE HAVE GONE TO GREAT LENGTHS TO ENSURE THAT ANY/ALL UNILATERAL ACTIVITY IN FRANCE IS CARRIED OUT UNDER STRINGENT OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES TO PROTECT SUCH ACTIVITIES AGAINST FRENCH COUNTER-ESPIONAGE CAPABILITIES. WHILE WE VIEW THIS AS AN ONGOING REQUIREMENT, ANY PRESS OR SERVICE APPREHENSION REGARDING OUR PRESENCE, SUCH AS COULD RESULT FROM ARRB TYPE RELEASES, COULD FORCE US TO FURTHER RESTRICT OUR UNILATERAL OPERATIONAL PARAMETERS -- SOMETHING WE WISH TO AVOID.

H. HAVE OFFICIAL USG RELEASES SUCH AS FOIA EVER APPEARED IN THE LOCAL MEDIA (E.G., JAPAN AND CAMPAIGN FINANCING OR PERU AND FOIA RELEASED CONCERNING VLADIMIRO MOTESINOS TORRES). REFERRED TO BY HOST GOVERNMENT EITHER ON THE RECORD OR OFF THE RECORD.

CURRENT STATION PERSONNEL HAVE NO RECOLLECTION OF SUCH INCIDENTS IN THE RECENT PAST. WE DEFER TO HQS FOR ANY ADDITIONAL HISTORICAL BACKGROUND.

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3. PLEASE ADVISE IF WE CAN PROVIDE ANY ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND.

4. FILE: NONE. DECL ON: X1; CL REASON: 1.5 (C); CL BY: 0707476 DRV HUM 4-82

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